

The Excellency of FORMS of PRAYER, the
LORD'S - PRAYER more Especially.

225 H 8

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SERMON

PREACHED before the

University of CAMBRIDGE,

A T

St. Mary's in A. D. 1644.

By JOHN PEARSON, A. M.
Fellow of *Kings College*, afterwards Lord-
Bishop of *Chester*.

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*When ye Pray, say, Our
Father.*

IF the Church should suffer in the Fury of a distempered and distracted State, it is so far from wonder, that it were the greatest if it should not, as being a Vessel that hath hardly escaped Shipwracks even on the calmest Seas. If those Persons who serve at the Altar should themselves be made a Sacrifice, their Enemies could raise no Admiration in them, who know they do but follow that City of God *Jerusalem*, even *Jerusalem* that killed the Prophets and Stoned them that were sent unto her. If their Sacred Functions should be Irreverently invaded and the Ministry of Reconciliation Profaned by a Promiscuous Intrusion, the Sin were great, though it were not new: Strange fire is as old as *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and the oldest of the people have *Jeroboam* for their Patron. If they should Conspire to disrobe the Spouse of Christ, to disinherit the Church, and say, Let us take to our selves the Houses of God in Possession, this is as Old as *Edom*, and *Moab*, and *Gebal*, and

A S E R M O N Preached

Amaleck. *Dionysius* has taught them how to jeer off *Jupiter's Cloak* and the Beard of *Æsculapius*. Nay some of our Selves, like Statues of *Victoria*, seem ready to deliver them with our own Hands. If they should come closer yet (as the Devil drew near to *Job*) and study to Rob them of their Learning too, it hath been done before. Alas the Apostate *Julian* would be their Predecessor: Nay if they should attempt it by Arms, the *Turks* did as much long since in the *Eastern*, and the *Goths* and *Vandals* in the *Western Church*. But that they should take away our Prayers too, the proper Weapons of our Church, this is beyond all Precedent. What, are we such Recusants that we must be thus disarmed? Or may it not be Lawfull to put up our Petitions, no not to God? What must we have an Arbitrary Service too? Or is Common Prayer to be taken in the *Hebrew Dialect* for Prophane? Are they so highly offended with the Name of Priest, that they will take away our Morning and Evening Sacrifice? And not leave us so much as the Calves of our Lips? Our Persons I confess may be Obnoxious, and Gold and Silver may be a Sin. But the Innocent Prayers, what have they deserved? How have they offended Man, when so often Appealed God? Or at what Bar shall they be Condemned, which have been Dayly admitted to the Throne of Grace? Did the Authors give their Bodies to the Fire, that their Books should be Burned? Or were such Reliques of Martyrs ever disallowed? Did Reverend *Cranmer* therefore first Sacrifice his Hand, because it had a part in the Liturgy? If nothing else methinks, Mr. *Calvin's* Approbation should keep it from an utter Abolition, or it must be a through Reformation indeed, that must Reform *Geneva* from Superstition.

on. But former Liturgies have been Erroneous, and the Prayers of our Church may have some Spice perhaps of Malignity in them: The Bishops had a hand in it. What think you if the Conjuring in the Litany hath raised all these Storms in the Common-wealth? What say you, if Praying for all that Travel by Land or Water hath brought so much Ammunition from beyond the Seas? What if the Prayer to deliver the King from all his Enemies, were the cause of his Separation from his Great Council? Indeed if this be True, there is some Cause why our Liturgy should be expunged, but that any should wrest from us the Prayer of our Lord, works, such a degree of Admiration, as it goes beyond Belief. What *Simeon* would suffer his Saviour to be pulled out of his Arms? What *Gadarenes* are these to strive to turn him out of their coasts? *Qui dedit vivere docuit & orare* (saith St. Cyprian) His Prayer ought to be as dear as our Life. Wherefore did the Apostles ask but that we might Learn? Why were they so Ignorant, but that we might know? For one of his Disciples said unto him, *Lord, teach us to Pray*, (Verse the 1st,) And he said unto them, *when ye Pray, say, Our Father*. In which Words three things are Observable.

1. *Indeterminatio temporis*, ὅταν προσεύχησθε, ὅταν Π. αὐχέσθε. When ye Pray.
2. *Determinatio Orationis*, λέγετε say. λέγετε.
3. *Individuatio determinationis*, πάντες ὑμεῖς. Πάτες Ημεῶν.

In the *Mosaical* Law the Duty of Prayer was not so Absolutely and Expressly commanded; there was no *General* Precept clearly obliging all the Children of *Israel* to a Petitionary Invocation expressly Propounded in the Covenant, in-

ſomuch that the Excellent Induſtry of the Ma-
 ſters of the *Jews*, who have Marſhalled out of the
 Law 613 diſtinct Commands have not found
 out one for Prayer, and *Abulenſis* after all his La-
 borious Comments upon *Mofes*, by which he
 puts as it were another Veil upon his Face, with
 a fond Warineſs, concludes that *quaſi nunquam*
invenitur. Indeed the Prophets who were ſome-
 what on the brighter ſide of the Cloud commanded
 Men to call upon God, either *ἀπλῶς*, or with
 Limitation of Times or Cauſes, but a Conſtant
 and perpetual Duty of Prayer was not Impoſed
 by any known Divine Injunction 'till under the
 Goſpel. For the Law once delivered, and un-
 derſtood only as the State of the People then re-
 quired, did not evidently crave a ſpecial and
 perpetual aid from Heaven, for the perfor-
 mance of it, neither was there then ſuch a diſ-
 proportion between the Promiſes and Precepts
 but that the Obedience to the one might work
 with ſome Modeſty and expectation of the o-
 ther; Beſides if the moſt Fervent Prayers had
 then been added to the moſt exact Obedience
 they could have wrought no abſolute certainty
 of the Legal Promiſes, God having prepared a
 far greater than they generally Expected or he
 plainly Propounded. But the height of that
 True and Inherent Sanctity which we are call-
 ed to under the Goſpel evidently requires the
 perpetual Influence of Heaven, the Continual
 Aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God: And yet the
 Infinite Diſproportion of our Duty with the
 Reward Revealed now challengeth the Supply
 of Petitions even upon ſuppoſal of the moſt
 Exact Obedience. Indeed the *Jewiſh* Sacrifices
 were in a manner Ceremonial or Symbolical
 Prayers. As *Orpheus*, and *Zoroaſter* uſed their Suſ-
 fumigations;

fumigations; Hence the Greek *ἀρα* without change of a letter is made the Latin *Ara*. So Christ is our Altar as he is our Intercessor. Not that they Prayed not under the Law, or that they were not obliged upon occasion. I know Invocation hath a more antient origin, at least from *Gen. 4.* the days of *Enos*, and can scarce be imagined Younger than Religion her self, being the most Proper and Natural Act thereof, as Schools observe, and therefore all the *Heathen Sages* exercised themselves therein as *Porphyrus* testifies of the *Indian Brachmans*, the *Persian Magi*, and the *Greek Theologi*, and the first Authors of the *Massalian Heresy* were *Gentiles*, as *Epiphanius* observes. So did the *Jews* in succeeding Ages, taught by frequent occasions, and the Examples of the Prophets. In the Temple they joyned them with their Sacrifice, in their Synagogues with Reading of the Law, which are therefore called by *Philo*, τὰ κατὰ πόλεις προσευχῆρια. *Προς.* And in their *Proseucha's* or Oratories, which were *ευχῆρια* as Chappels of Ease out of their Cities they used them alone. Besides their ordinary Devotions, it is not Improbable that the most Eminent of their Doctors as they Instructed their Disciples in the Knowledge of the Law, so they prescribed or directed their Prayers, for *Solus Deus docere potuit, ut se vellet orari*. And therefore from whom we Receive the Revelation of the Will of God, we cannot but desire to be Taught to Pray according to it. Thus *St. John* the Baptist taught his Disciples and the Disciples of our Lord (some of whom had belonged to *John* before) desired as much of his.

One of his Disciples said unto him, Lord teach us to Pray, as *John* also taught his Disciples,

ciples, which Request as we cannot Imagine could be denied, so we cannot Conceive any more than Two ways to grant it, either by Forming a Prayer for them, or by delivering them Rules and Directions how to frame one. Now our Saviour takes the Former way, not laying down any Precepts, but delivering them a certain Set-Form, a Prayer of it self, and a Pattern for others, which is the second Observable in the Text. *Determinatio Orationis.* He gives them not a Directory, but a Form; He tells them not *how* but *what* they are to say. And he said unto them, *when ye Pray, Say, Our Father, &c.*

Thus the Sacerdotal Benediction and *Decimal* Profession were delivered in an Express Form, and the Psalms of *David*, (of which *St. Jerome*, hath observed Four to be Intituled Prayers,) were a Standing Part of the *Jewish Liturgy*; the 70 Disciples who were sent to Preach the Gospel, *Luk. 10.* were all to use one Short Benediction as it were before Sermon. *St. Paul* concludes almost all his Epistles with one Form of Prayer, yet I hope his Spirit was of no bad invention. *Justin Martyr* one of the eldest Sons of the Primitive Church mentions their *Κοινὰς εὐχὰς*, their Common-Prayers, and *Tertullian* hath left us the Heads of their Ordinary Prayers for the *Heathen Emperors*, *Vitam Prolixam, imperium Securum, Domum Tutam, Exercitus Fortes, Senatum Fidelem, Populum Probum, Orbem Quietum.* Thus they Prayed for the Prosecutors of the Church, more than some of us will do for the Defender of the Faith.

Constantine

Constantine the Great, whose Portraiture was stamped on his Coin in a Posture of Prayer had his *ἑνθύσμις* *Ἑυχὰς* composed with study and Pre-meditation, *Ἑυχὰς ἑνθύσμις σὺν τοῖς τὸν Βασιλεῖον οἶκον ἀληθεῶς ἀπειδίδω* (saith Euseb.) he duly said his set and appointed Prayers with his Household. Some have thought the Emperor our Country Man. Certainly, there cannot be a more proper Description of our present *Constantine*. Nay besides, he Pen'd a Form of Prayer to be said by all his Armies. And it ended thus, *πᾶν ἡμέτερον Βασιλεῖα Κωνσταντῖνον, παῖδάς τε αὐτοῦ Θεοφιλεῖς ἐπὶ μῆκισον ἡμῖν εἰς ὅσον καὶ νικητὴν φυλάσσειται ποτνιόμεθα*. Give me leave not only to Translate it into our Language, but into our Affections and Devotions also. We beseech thee, O Lord, to preserve our King, and his Royal Issue amongst us both safe and victorious. Thus the first Christian Monarch was Zealous of the Set Prayers of the Church, and they that strike at one, will not spare the other; and yet such there be, who instead of Buyers and Sellers, whip the very Prayers out of the Temple, turn them out of their House with their new Divinity, sweeping out all good Christianity; all Prayer must be new, and lest they should continue, must be spent in the making, expire at the first Breath, and pass away (as God once appeared) in a Sound, for fear of Idolatry. Otherwise their Christian Liberty is Enthralled, and the Spirit of God is fettered: What? Can the Issue of these things be Momentary, whose Causes to be divided are continual, and Effects Eternal; are their Words so truly *Ἐπεὶ πέραντα*, that they fly from their Lips never to Return again? What is our Memory Profane, that

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Constantine

when we kneel unto God we are bound to forget? Indeed *Enos* who is first mentioned to call upon the Name of God is interpreted by *Euseb.* Ἐπιλήσιμων, Forgetful. But if we should conclude it from thence, our Argument would be worse than his Interpretation. What are these but Distempers which break out in such suddain fits? and Abortive Meditations which are conceived, and born together? But they Object we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it self maketh Intercession for us. 'Tis true; so no Man can say that Jesus is the Lord, *i. e.* make a Right Profession of the Faith, but by the Holy Ghost. What, shall we therefore have Extemporary Creeds too, and stand up, and begin with *I believe* at a venture? So should we quickly have two Articles cut off; The descent into Hell would be swallowed up immediately, and we should hear no more of the Catholick Church. Χαλῶ τῷ πνεύματι, (saith *St. Paul*,) I will Sing with the Spirit. Were it not excellent Musick to hear them Sing Psalms Extempore; and those who yet do but Read to them in several Corners, at length Dictate by Inspiration? But this Opinion is not altogether so gross, it hath been of late Refuted. It is lawful now to hear Divine Service, so it be not enjoined. A Set Form may be digested, so it be not Commanded. This is a pure Spirit of Disobedience, the Set Form it self may be harmless, add but a little Obedience to it, and then it is Heinous. They have hitherto denied Man a Power to make any thing unlawful by Prohibiting, and do they grant him a Power, to make something Unlawful by Commanding? Heretofore they have told us the Human Laws cannot bind the Conscience, now they

they Distinguish all in a different Character, to do what they Command they cannot, but Not to do they can. Here is a new Legislative Power which permits by Forbidding and Forbids by Commanding, a strange Sword of Justice that cuts with the Back, and Heals with the Edge. They may as well say that if our Sovereign were a private Man, they might lay down their Arms, but being He is their King, they cannot in Conscience. By this we may see what strange Divinity we are like to have, if the Spiritual Lords shall be divested of their Jurisdiction, and the Temporal possess their Chairs, and so I pass to the third thing Observable,

Individuatio Determinationis. The particular Forms here prescribed, the *Pater-Noster*, when ye pray, say, *Our Father*, &c. Here some will scarce be persuaded it is a Prayer at all, but a Pattern only. A Pattern I confess it is, and so I understand St. *Matthew's* *ὁμολογία*, and *Tertullian's Oratio Legitima*, in his Book *de Fuga*, but surely it is a Prayer too. Otherwise our Saviour Christ, should Command us when we pray not to pray. For he said unto them, when ye pray, say, *Our Father*. So that this is a kind of Antichristian Doctrine formally opposing Christ. When ye pray (says he) say, *Our Father*. But they say, when ye say *Our Father*, ye do not pray. Well this being Granted their scrupulous Conscience checks them still, a Prayer it is in itself they yield, but not to us. It is not lawful to use it as a Prayer. What, not lawful? Is there any Law against the Legislator? It hath been Innocent near 1600 Years, and is it now grown Offensive? can the Pretence of the Spirit thrust out that, *Quia nulla Spiritualior Oratio*, as St. *Cyprian* thinks? Or can we imagine that that which was made by the Son to be presented to the

the Father, should be interrupted by the Holy Ghost? In the Primitive times, the only Question was, whether it were lawful to use any other beside it, now the Judges are changed, they are let free, and this alone is questioned. It was once late vehemently Objected against our Liturgy, that it omitted the last (though suspected) clause, now it is accused for admitting the Rest, before it was a Crime to want a piece, and now 'tis a greater to have it all. Ay, but we never Read that the Apostles used it. It is true we never Read that they Baptized any in the Name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost, this is the *Socinian's* Argument for neglect of Baptism. Nay in this our Schismatics are more Inconsequential than they. They using the Negative Argument only to exclude all Necessity, these to enforce an Unlawfulness. Now there is a large Difference between Unlawful and Unnecessary. Besides, though we Read it not in Scriptures, yet this we know that the Primitive Church used the Lord's-Prayer perpetually at the Eucharist, and this Tradition was so constant that *St. Jerom* doubts not to affirm that Christ so taught his Disciples. *Sic docuit Apostolos suos ut quotidie in Corporis illius Sacrificio auderent loqui Pater Noster*, saith he in the third *Adversus Pelag.* For the further Illustration give me leave to acquaint you with a piece of Antiquity of the Infancy of the Church. When any were converted to Christianity, they first made a Profession of their Faith, and a promise to live according to it, then they fasted and prayed for Remission of their former Sins, which done they were Baptized, and immediately after being brought to the Congregation, received the Eucharist, as appears out of *Justin Martyr's* Apology, and

which St. Jerom, *de Baptismatis Fonte, Surgentes statim in primâ Corporis Communionem Christi dicunt Dimitte nobis debita nostra*. His meaning is, as soon as they were Baptized they Received the Communion, and saying the Lord's-Prayer according to Custom, asked God forgiveness of their Sins, though they were forgiven in Baptism, and therefore 'tis a Ridiculous Custom in the *Romish Mass*, that the Deacon should say, *Liberate nos à Malo*, and not the Priest, lest he might be suspected to be Guilty of some Mortal Sin. If then a perpetual and Universal Tradition of the Catholick Church hath any Authority in respect of us; if a clear and expresse precept of Christ, makes the thing Commanded beyond Dispute, how can that be unlawful, than which nothing at first was more clearly Delivered; nothing since more universally received of us, but if they delight so in their Negative Argumentations, I can help them with one more I believe, never any of the Fathers said it was Lawful. What is the Reason? They were better Orators than so. It had been a cold Expression to tell them, that was Lawful which no Man Doubted to be Divine, whoever said it is Lawful to Fear God, and 'tis no Sin to believe in Christ?

Away with these Scrupulous and Contradictious Spirits. Let's make use of these Words of our Advocate *Agnoscat Pater Filii sui verba*, God said once from Heaven, This is my Beloved Son, hear him: When we Repeat this Prayer we might Return these Words again, this is thy Beloved Son, hear him. Who would Refuse that Petition which was Pen'd by him, who was first to promote it as our Advocate, and after to answer it as our Judge? And thus have I done

done with my Third and last observable *Individuation determinationis*, the *Pater Noster*, *Why ye pray, say, Our Father*. But now I have done with my Text, and seriously Reflect upon my Former Discourse. To what end is all this? To what purpose do I labour thus to decide these Controversies? The *Jews* have been so wise as to Refer their Difficulties to the coming *Elias*, and cannot we stay till the Synod be convened? What if the *Carthaginian* and *Miletan* Councils have determined for Set Form what if the Council of *Toledo* Enacted a Daily Repetition of the Lord's-Prayer? Alas they pretended but to one Holy Ghost among the all: We are like to have divers Spirits in one. They were chosen but by the Clergy, They shall be Elected by a Representative Body of the whole Kingdom. Besides, they never had any yet out of *America*. We shall have some *Columbus's* discoveries, and of the Spirit which moves upon the *Pacifick Waters*. Therefore to conclude in a Word, whosoever will not freely submit his Judgment with all the Obedience of Faith to the determination of such a Synod, he deserves no better than to be counted a Member of the *Catholick Church*.



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